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Title: Need to provide assistance to the Agricultural Sector in the Country.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR (CALICUT): Sir thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

There is a welcome talk in the air that fuel prices may again be reduced. This is in the context of crude price dipping to \$ 47 per barrel from a high of \$ 147. Earlier petrol prices were reduced by five rupees and diesel prices by three rupees.

In such a scenario, it is unfortunate that no concession is given to the agricultural sector. Cotton and sugar producers got Minimum Support Price (MSP) and procurement. In this context to revive the whole agricultural sector, immediate reduction in the price of fertilizers has to be announced. Fertilizer prices have been steeply increasing since the 1990's. The all-State average rates of fertilizer costs estimated at Rs. 228 per hectare in the 1970's rose to Rs. 534 in the 1980's, to Rs. 1,339 in the 1990's and Rs. 1,755 per hectare in the first half of the current decade. [\[p6\]](#)

Adequate availability of Factomphos and Urea and other fertilizers has to be ensured. In this context, I would like to say that the productivity of FACT located in Kerala which has seen drastic drop in production, has to be restored to the earlier production level.

With regard to credit to agriculture, a slab at 4 per cent interest is fixed for loans up to Rs.10,000 only. Then, the interest rate goes up with every increasing scale of finance. Hence, the much-touted 4 per cent interest on agricultural loans should be implemented immediately for higher amounts of credit also. Also, I urge the Government to make available subsidised electricity to farmers as the electricity charges are going high.